

## The Douglas-Withers Family

The Douglas-Withers family can be traced back to **Henry WITHERS**, b 1852 and married in 1877 to Margaret Tutt. Henry was a bailiff and land agent in Northampton. They had one son, **Herbert Henry WITHERS**, b 1885. Henry and Margaret died in 1891 and 1890 respectively leaving young Henry an orphan at the age of six to be brought up by his guardian, Miss Ellen Ingold of Bath.

Herbert Henry (known as Henry or Bunny) was commissioned into the South Lancashire Regiment and served in WW1 at Gallipoli and in Mesopotamia and the Caucasus, winning a Military Cross. In his later career he became a military impresario, staging the Aldershot Tattoo each year which was a major spectacle and earned him the OBE. He was also a skilled horseman. We have his medals and the cup that he won for racing in India. In 1914 Henry changed his name to **DOUGLAS-WITHERS**. The reason for this is not clear, but probably had a link to his guardian and his gratitude to her. He married **Vera EVERETT** in 1914. They had two sons: John (your great grandfather) and David.



1944 Pop Dean, Vera D-W, Maud Dean, Bunny D-W

**John DOUGLAS-WITHERS** b 1919. Following school at Shrewsbury, he went up to Oxford, but never finished his degree due to WW2. He was commissioned into the Royal Artillery and served in North Africa and Italy, earning the MC at Anzio. He remained in the Army after the war, pursuing a distinguished career to Major General and earning the CBE. This was followed by 5 years as the Group Personnel Manager for Jardine Matheson in Hong Kong after which he retired to Burmington, near Shipston on Stour, Warwickshire. In 1945 John married **Sylvia (Dickie) DEAN** b 1922. Sylvia was the ninth child of Arthur (Pop) DEAN and Maud St Clair COWNE. Sylvia, after a short career on the stage as a singer/dancer, joined the Women's Royal Naval Service and retired in 1945 due to pregnancy. They had two children – myself and Sally. John died in 1997 from cancer after which Sylvia lived alongside ourselves and the Freedmans in Stonehenge Road in Amesbury, before moving to Amesbury Abbey where she died in 2018.



John and Sylvia Feb 1945

I (**Mark Guy DOUGLAS-WITHERS** b 1945) was educated at Shrewsbury, joined the Army in 1963 and was commissioned into the Royal Artillery, retiring in 2000 as a Brigadier and the Director Royal Artillery. Over the years I served in Germany, UK, Belize and Canada with only the one operational tour, that being in N Ireland. I did an in-service degree course obtaining a BSc (Hons) in Mechanical Engineering from London University and was appointed CBE in 1990, primarily reflecting work as a Colonel in the MOD. On retirement, I worked for 2.5 years as a Sales and Marketing manager in Thales (a defence company) before moving to become the Director Land Systems in QinetiQ (another defence company). I retired in 2008. My life history and the family history is recorded elsewhere and your father can, of course, tell you about most of it.

Your Granny, **Joanna (Josie) Henrietta DOUGLAS-WITHERS** nee **REYNOLDS**, b 1950 and I had met fleetingly in earlier years, met again in April 1976 and married at Christmas that year. Your Granny was born in Salisbury. Her family lived in the early 1950s in Lippstadt in Germany where her father was serving with the Army, returning after that to Camberley where the family settled. Her education, primarily at Farnham Grammar School, was badly disrupted by the death of her father in 1961, a knee problem and finally the death of her grandmother in 1967 and grandfather in 1968 on the day before her A levels. Both grandparents were living with the family at the time. Despite these difficulties, she moved on to complete a secretarial course and to work in London as an increasingly senior secretary and PA in the film industry (Rank and Paramount), Acquascutum and PR. Following our marriage, she continued to work as a secretary in most of the places where we lived, ending up as the administrator of the sheltered accommodation in Amesbury Abbey. Both she and her sister suffer from the same heart problems passed down from their parents. We have two children:



*1990 Myself, your Granny, your Father and Robin*

- Robin, b 1978, was educated at Godstowe and Downe House, travelled the world on a gap year, read Archaeology and Anthropology at Durham University and then started a career in Publishing. Charles Montgomery lived down the road in Amesbury. They married in 2008. Charles followed his father into The Royal Engineers, retiring in 2019 to work for the wine merchants Berry Brothers.
- Your father, b 1980, was educated at Horris Hill and Bradfield, read Mathematics and Philosophy at Warwick and moved on into Rathbones.



*April 1981 Your Father at his christening*

**Sally FREEDMAN** b 1948, my sister, was educated at Tildonk Convent in Belgium followed by a secretarial course in London during which she met **Mike FREEDMAN**. They married in 1968, living in Wimbledon, Stanton Harcourt and Amesbury. Mike inherited the family paper merchanting company, moving on to be the director of a number of companies leading to retirement in 2010. They have two children:

- Alexander, b 1971, married to Georgina Ballantine with one child – Hugo. They live in Pewsey and Alex runs the Aquaid franchise in north Wiltshire.
- Sophie, b 1974, married to Mark Neville and living in Hook. Mark owns a steel fabricating company and Sophie is the company secretary. They have two children: Toby who is pursuing a career in football and is currently in the junior squad at Exeter City; and Charlie Guy.



*Xmas 1996: Your father, Sally, Mike, Sophie and Alex Freedman, myself, Granny, Great Grandfather John, Great Grandmother Dickie, Robin*

**David DOUGLAS-WITHERS** b 1926 went to Eton after which he was commissioned into the Royal Green Jackets and later the South Lancashire Regiment. He was not suited to soldiering and left after a short time to train as a chartered accountant. Despite several attempts, he failed to pass the exams and worked thereafter for National Cash Registers. David married Nancy STOREY, with whom he had three children:

- Vivien, married to Alistair Ogden with two children and living near Henley.
- Hugh, an undertaker married to Dawn with one daughter and living in New Zealand.
- Myles who works in IT, is married to Helen and has two daughters. They also live in New Zealand.

David divorced Nancy in 1969 to marry Jean Scales, a BBC executive. They separated in 1989 as David became ill leading to his death in 1990. Jean lives in Henley-on-Thames.

**The future.** At the present time, therefore, there are twelve Douglas-Withers – Jean, myself, your Granny, your father and mother and Hugh and Myles's families. It looks likely that in the fullness of time the future of the name will depend on you alone – unless of course you have a brother!

## The Everett Family

The EVERETT family can be traced back to Elizabethan days to **John EVERETT** of Boyton in 1550 and then through six generations to **William EVERETT** of Tytherington b 1715 – a clothier and corn merchant who married to Alice GALE of Ludgershall. They had nine children, the eldest of which was **Thomas EVERETT** b 1740. The Everetts had by now amassed substantial wealth from the cloth trade, sufficient among other things to allow Thomas to found a bank, later to become Everett & Co which ceased trading in 1825. Thomas was also able to buy Biddesden House near Ludgershall in 1785 from General John Webb who had been one of The Duke of Marlborough's Generals and had distinguished himself at the battles of Oudenard and Ramilles. Through this, Thomas became the MP for Ludgershall. Thomas married Martha DIXON and they had ten children, the eldest son and heir being Joseph Hague EVERETT.



*Biddesden House*

**Joseph Hague EVERETT** was a director of the bank, a successful London barrister and the MP for Ludgershall. He married Margaret Cook, the daughter of Major John Cook of the East India Company whose portrait remains in the family, along with those of his Granddaughter (Anne) and his Great Great Granddaughter (Vera). The family also still has some of the silver cutlery from Biddesden along with a pair of mirrors. The estates passed from Joseph to the eldest surviving male of his twelve children – **Charles William EVERETT** b 1809, who was the Rector of Woolhampton and married to Amelia Fraser Jardine. The fourth of their twelve children was **Charles Edwin EVERETT** b 1857 who married Violet Guy Parkinson which is where the inclusion of 'Guy' as a family name starts. Charles shows his profession as 'Gentleman' and is believed to have led an extravagant life with a taste for gambling. It is during his time that the money ran out and in 1907 Biddesden House and the estate were sold and the family moved to Instow in Devon.

Charles and Violet had four children, **Vera Guy** b 1889 (my grandmother), Guy, Dick, and Daphne who died in infancy. Vera married Henry DOUGLAS-WITHERS. Vera was left a widow at the age of 59 and remained at

Manorbier until about 1958, providing the base for many of my childhood holidays and Christmases. Thereafter she moved around taking rooms in various guest houses. She became a difficult old lady, dying in 1978.